

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a green tractor working in a field. The tractor is positioned on the right side of the frame, moving towards the left. The field is brown and appears to be recently plowed. In the background, there are several green trees and a clear blue sky.

The Great Grid Upgrade

Eastern Green Link 3 (EGL 3) and
Eastern Green Link 4 (EGL 4)

Preliminary environmental information report (PEIR)

Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2.6.B National and Local Statutory
Designated Sites
May 2025

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2.6.B National and Local Statutory Designated Sites

Table 2.6.B-1 – National designated sites within 2 km

National Designated Site	Designated Feature Summary	Approximate Distance and direction from draft Order Limits
Willoughby Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Unimproved neutral grassland once common over Lincolnshire Middle Marsh boulder clay. Over one hundred species have been recorded from its small acreage. Surrounded by hedgerows, this field is still managed by the traditional means of taking a hay crop followed by grazing. Two small ponds are located at the field's edge.	Within draft Order Limits
Candlesby Hill SSSI	<p>Extensive chalk grassland with scrub and woodland supporting notable plants, invertebrates and birds.</p> <p>One of the best remnants of the once extensive chalk grasslands of the southeast Lincolnshire Wolds. Together with surrounding scrub and broad-leaved woodland, the site provides an excellent example of the sequence of change to a mature system.</p> <p>The ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> woodland, which contains some sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>, is edged by scrub merging into open grassland, forming an amphitheatre with the exposed chalk cliff.</p> <p>Herbs growing in association with woody species include false brome <i>Brachypodium sylvatica</i>, black bryony <i>Tamus communis</i>, hound's tongue <i>Cynoglossum officinale</i> and twayblade <i>Listera ovata</i>. Finches and warblers are well represented and include garden warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i> and lesser whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i>.</p> <p>The dominant species in the grassland are tor grass <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i>, and meadow oat <i>Avenula pratensis</i>. There are extensive areas of marjoram <i>Origanum vulgare</i>, perforate St. John's wort <i>Hypericum perforatum</i>, carline thistle <i>Carlina vulgaris</i> and burnet saxifrage <i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>. Plants scarce in the East Midlands include bladder campion <i>Silene vulgaris</i>, dropwort <i>Filipendula vulgaris</i> and small scabious <i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>. Orchids include pyramidal <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>, common spotted <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i> and bee <i>Ophrys apifera</i>. Butterflies are present in large numbers and 17 species of mollusc have been recorded.</p>	0.34 km west

National Designated Site	Designated Feature Summary	Approximate Distance and direction from draft Order Limits
Willoughby Wood SSSI	<p>Ancient woodland supporting rich flora and notable breeding birds.</p> <p>Willoughby Wood is representative of the series of ancient woodlands found on the middle Marsh Boulder Clay on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds. It is predominantly oak-ash and hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>, managed as coppice with standards. This supports a characteristic and rich ground flora. The site is notable for its breeding birds.</p> <p>In addition to pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and ash, field maple <i>Acer campestre</i> is common in the margin and within the wood, on pockets of lime-rich soil. The shrub layer includes dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>, guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>, goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i> and the occasional thicket of blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>.</p> <p>The more open canopy has a ground flora dominated by bramble but there is an abundance of ferns, including male fern <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> and broad buckler <i>D. dilatata</i>. One ride is notable for the quantity of woodruff <i>Galium odoratum</i> and the wood banks are dominated by dog's mercury <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> and wood false brome <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>. Though enrichment of the soil beneath the heronry has favoured plants like nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, scarcer plants are found throughout the wood. These include early purple orchid <i>Orchis mascula</i>, wood anemone <i>Anemone nemorosa</i>, broad-leaved helleborine <i>Epipactis helleborine</i>, wood speedwell <i>Veronica montana</i>, yellow pimpernel <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> and toothwort <i>Lathraea squamaria</i>. The abundance of the moss <i>Fontinalis antipyretica</i> is a feature of the spring and stream.</p> <p>Breeding birds include heron <i>Ardea Cinerea</i>, woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>, tawny owl <i>Strix aluco</i> and greater spotted woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>.</p>	0.44 km west
Willoughby Branch Line Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	<p>A disused branch railway which has developed into a wildlife area composed of ashwood, hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> scrub and grassland which supports a varied flora, including hemp-agrimony <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>, common spotted orchid, twayblade, lady's bedstraw <i>Galium verum</i>, yellow-wort <i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i> and great burnet <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>.</p> <p>The reserve supports a variety of butterfly species, including common blue <i>Polyommatus icarus</i> and several species of skippers and browns. Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>, lesser whitethroat <i>Curruca curruca</i>, blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>, sedge warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>, redpoll <i>Acanthis flammea</i> and other species can be found nesting at the reserve.</p>	0.82 km west

National Designated Site	Designated Feature Summary	Approximate Distance and direction from draft Order Limits
Hoplands Wood SSSI	<p>Situated on the northern side of a shallow valley on the poorly draining boulder clay of the Lincolnshire Middle Marsh, Hoplands Wood is one of the best remaining examples of oak/ash ancient woodland in north Lincolnshire. It is characterised by a local abundance of alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and a mosaic of tree species perpetuated by a long history of woodland management promoting both high forest and coppice-with-standards. This favours a rich and varied ground flora and breeding bird community.</p> <p>Pedunculate oak and ash occur throughout as standards and old coppice. Wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i> is concentrated on the eastern side of the wood where hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i>, rare in Lincolnshire, is found. Field maple is on marginal pockets of lime-rich soil. Coppiced hazel is within a species-rich shrub layer of dogwood, goat willow, holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>, guelder rose and blackthorn.</p> <p>Dog's mercury is locally abundant. Elsewhere brambles <i>Rubus</i> spp. are found with bluebells <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>, greater stitchwort <i>Stellaria holostea</i>, honeysuckle <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i> and male and broad buckler ferns and <i>D. austriaca</i>.</p> <p>Uncommon plants include herb paris <i>Paris quadrifolia</i>, broad-leaved helleborine, greater butterfly orchid <i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>, and soft shield fern <i>Polystichum setiferum</i>, primrose <i>Primula vulgaris</i>, wood anemone <i>Anemonoides nemorosa</i> and woodruff all occur in quantity.</p> <p>Of two hundred species of moths recorded the buttoned snout <i>Hypona rostralis</i> is notable. Breeding birds include woodcock, tawny owl, greater spotted woodpecker, tree creeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i> and four species of warblers.</p>	0.97 km west
Sea Bank Clay Pits SSSI	<p>Notable reedbed and wetland habitats supporting notable invertebrates and plant species, and breeding, wintering and passage birds.</p> <p>The Sea Bank Clay Pits comprise a series of isolated flooded clay workings of varying size, depth and topography which now support uncommon aquatic plant communities characteristic of the slightly brackish, eutrophic (nutrient-rich) water in addition to extensive reedbeds and a rich marginal wetland flora. The pits were excavated in 1953 to provide material for the repair of the sea wall between Mablethorpe and Chapel St. Leonards on the Lincolnshire Coast. The pits are also important for breeding, wintering and passage birds. They are known to support a rich aquatic invertebrate fauna, notably beetles,</p>	1.76 km northwest

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	<p>including several nationally scarce species and others new to the County.</p> <p>The water plant communities of the pits are characterised by fennel pondweed <i>Potamogeton pectinatus</i>, lesser pondweed <i>P. pusillus</i>, horned pondweed <i>Zannichellia palustris</i>, spiked watermilfoil <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>, algae of the genus <i>Enteromorpha</i> and two nationally scarce species: brackish water crowfoot <i>Ranunculus baudotii</i> and soft hornwort <i>Ceratophyllum submersum</i>. Superimposed upon this basic suite of species are variations such as the local dominance of Canadian waterweed <i>Elodea canadensis</i> and the moss. In addition there is abundant amphibious bistort <i>Polygonum amphibium</i> and rigid hornwort <i>C. demersum</i>. Large stands of common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> occur as a broad margin, especially at Huttoft. Associated with the reedbeds are sea clubrush <i>Scirpus maritimus</i>, branched bur-reed <i>Sparganium erectum</i>, reedmace <i>Typha latifolia</i> and false fox <i>Carex otrubae</i> and greater pond sedges <i>C. riparia</i>.</p> <p>Large colonies of common spotted orchid occur at Wolla Bank in marshy ground. Here, the flora clearly reflects a brackish influence since wild celery <i>Apium graveolens</i>, sea couch <i>Elymus pycnanthus</i>, saltmarsh rush <i>Juncus gerardii</i> and sea arrowgrass <i>Triglochin maritimus</i> are present.</p>	
Claxby Chalk Pit SSSI	<p>Disused quarry with chalk grassland, scrub, woodland, supporting a range of plants, invertebrates, birds and bats. Notable example of Lincolnshire Wolds chalk grassland, which only survives in disused quarries or on steep, unploughable slopes. Since this grassland is in the context of an old chalk pit, its value is increased for it represents a stage within the process of continuous changes from grassland through to scrub and broad-leaved woodland.</p> <p>The grassland is dominated by characteristic chalk downland species: upright brome <i>Bromus erectus</i> and red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i> with meadow oat, tor grass and quaking grass <i>Briza media</i> locally common. Within this sward are numerous herbs (each abundant) dependent upon the very high levels of calcium in the soil; examples are marjoram, hawkweed oxtongue <i>Picris hieracioides</i>, wild basil <i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>, wild carrot <i>Daucus carota</i> and perforate St John's-wort. Four orchid species occur bee, pyramidal, common spotted and twayblade.</p> <p>The hawthorn and blackthorn scrub has abundant wild rose <i>Rosa canina</i>. The areas of woodland to the south and fringing the quarry to the east and west are dominated by beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> and ash with some pedunculate oak and sycamore.</p>	1.98 km west

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	<p>In the ground flora dog's mercury is locally dominant with violets <i>Viola</i> spp, primrose and toothwort.</p> <p>Breeding birds include spotted flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>, tawny owl and pied wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>. Woodcock occurs. Both pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus</i> spp. and long-eared bats are regularly seen.</p>	

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